

THE CYNICK.

BY GROWLER GRUFF, ESQUIRE,

AIDED BY A CONFEDERACY OF
LETTERED DOGS.

"We'll snarl, and bite, and play the dog,"
———"For dogs are honest."

Vol. I. Saturday, November 2, 1811. No. VI.

*Sunt quibus in Satira videar nimis acer et ultra,
Legem tendere opus.* HOR.

THE substance, if not the very words of the above quotation, we believe, has been frequently applied to us, since the appearance of our book. The ties which connect an individual in society, as a friend or a relation, are so multiplied, that any censure, however wholesome and necessary, will naturally have to combat the feelings and opinions of a very extended circle. To this circle, if composed of persons of honour and sense, we address ourselves as brethren, and request their patient hearing, while we respectfully submit us and our cause; if on the other hand, they are those unfortunate and bi-

gotted individuals, who believe in human infallibility, and are persuaded, that a man is right, because he has been their inmate or acquaintance, and who, without a reflected opinion of their own will support him at all hazards, they shall find that place in our estimation, that their insignificance deserves; nor shall we trouble ourselves with giving them even a glance of contempt, which their officious vanity may construe as a token of fearful anger.

A well regulated state of public opinion, founded upon the healthful and well organised tone of the public feeling is the most precious and unerring evidence of a people, pure, honest, and enlightened. Among no nation on the earth is such a propriety of opinion so essentially requisite as the one of which the benignant Providence of Heaven has been pleased to make us constituent members. Our system is founded upon the principle, which of all others, meets with the most universal and undeniable approbation in the abstract reasoning of man—that all men are by nature equal, and therefore, whatever superiority of privilege one man may enjoy over another, is to be found in the corrupt and detestable propensity to detract from the distributive share of individual rights.

It has been our misfortune to be the witnesses of an attempt, savouring in no small degree of this arbitrary disposition. It probably proceeded not from corruption. If so, it is less of an immorality; but still the injury of the act remains equally extensive. There is, incomparably, less of pernicious tendency in filching a piece of family plate from an individual, than in the at-

tempt to give to one of two equally independent men, a privilege and benefit over the other, which is the price of a casual possession of a redundancy of property.

To this estimable correctness of publick sentiment alone, must we look for the redress of those evils which are removed by any circumstance beyond the ken of human laws. A thousand provisions in our statute books, are but melancholy proofs of the ease with which laws are framed, and the impudence and cunning with which they are slighted and evaded. To what source shall the anguished friends of humanity look for the alarming prevalence of the practice of duelling. It is a gross and shameful reflection upon a sober and enlightened people, and a farce disgraceful even to a community of savages, that we should depute a representation of eighty or ninety individuals to constitute a code of provisions against this shameful practice, and should enforce it with the severity of penal sanctions, if an individual be allowed to come with hands reeking with the monstrous offence, and find a refuge and support in the bosom of that society, whose most sacred ordinances he has infringed, and find his character stand higher as to courage and respectability in the opinion and feeling of the public, because he has had hardihood sufficient to despise their laws, and impudence enough to tell them by his acts, that he entertained not an atom of respect for them. The evil, however, will continue to advance with great strides, until public reprobation shall hiss it from our shores, or until a tribunal shall be erected to punish with severity every infraction of the rules of propriety,

or at best, every act or word that carries a reflection upon another's *honour*.

But while our feelings would not have permitted us to pass over this monstrous evidence of a want of a manifestation of propriety of sentiment, to come more immediately to the object of our paper, we think it a duty incumbent upon us, to felicitate them on the honourable probity with which they have beaten down an attempt as novel as it was alarming, and as reprehensible, under all the circumstances of the case, as any thing that has come within the experience of our short numbered years. Their steady and powerful disapprobation has beaten to the ground, the unwarrantable plan of the Managers of our Theatre, to make their exhibitions a place of disagreeable impropriety. We hail the event as a precious indication of the point to which a manly exertion of their minds will lead, and we view them as brethren and fellow citizens united to us by a new tie, and a new proof of endearment. The thing has been conducted with dignity and decency, and in no instance has the calm, silent and persevering flow of their opinion been more honourably called forth, or more efficiently triumphant.

To the managers themselves, we feel it consistent with our candour, to say something ere we part. The impudence of cavillers we disregard; and whatever severity of animadversion may have sprung from our pens, we think may find a justifiable supposition, an honest indignation—and we hold it politick and wise, that the assault of flagrant abuses should be rather ever ardent than impotently moderate. If it has been attempted by the supporters of the managers to extenuate as much as

within them lay, we can with clear consciences, put our hands upon our hearts, and declare that we have "set down naught in malice." We congratulate them on the return of their good sense and their sense of honour. As faithful observers, we will be the foremost in yielding them the praise to which they shall be entitled, and solemnly assure them that it will afford us an honest and sincere pleasure, if a worthy disposition shall actuate their conduct, and bid the reluctant spirit of censure to slumber for ever. Before we conclude, we will recommend to their perusal, an interesting fable, with which we met among the ruins and rubbish of the garret of an unfortunate but valuable writer.

The hardy and industrious republick of ants had existed from a distant period, and had enjoyed in hereditary succession, the convenient abode of their first progenitors. The site of their community was some depth below the surface of an extensive and uncultured plain. From the force of necessity, inured to labour, and indefatigable in their exertions, they were feared and respected by their surrounding neighbours. The wild and unimproved situation of place, obliged them to bring their supplies from an immense distance. In this state of honourable industry, they remained for many generations; they remained like the independent and hardy Lacedemonians, the most powerful and redoubtable of the republicks.

The facility of acquiring sustenance, leads to the miseries of wealth, and wealth has overturned the most powerful of nations. The plain came at last into the hands of an industrious farmer, and its surface was an-

nually covered with a luxuriant harvest; and the republic of ants supplied themselves by many exertions, with a teeming and abundant store. They became fastidiously nice in the selection of their food, and indolence and pride soon followed in the train. Monopoly at length raised its gorgon head among their sturdy independence, and when the rigours of winter began to prevail, a hoarding and avaricious spirit among some, amassed and collected to their centre, what the prodigality and licentiousness of others had dissipated. The wealthy began to think less of their less opulent neighbour, and hence invidious and illiberal distinctions first took their rise. But even now they had not departed much from their ancient habits, and would probably have honestly reverted to their pristine respectability.

But, unfortunately, the prevalence of wealth had caused many factious wants and desires, and gave rise to a set of idling loungers, who procured wealth to themselves in an easy way, without any labour or exertion. The ants were amused with ridiculous grimaces and nonsensical shews, which they would before have scorned. In the beginning, a race arose among them, who were expert at tumbling head over heels—walking on their heads—and jumping over huge straws. They would imitate some unfortunate ant in a clumsy way of walking, and take off any of the community in their oddities and frivolities. In fact, nothing serious or solemn that could be placed in a ridiculous light—no trifle that afforded amusement to an insignificant set of spectators, escaped the whimsical influence of their imitative powers. The place of their exhibitions, was a large cavity

formed by the side of their town, the entrance to which was a small hole, sufficient for the admission of two or three ants at a time. A grain of wheat or barley was the only sum required from an individual for a free access to any exhibition; and here the idle wasted away their substance, and the more respectable became less so. In the progress of time, however, the impudence of the juggling ants increased as they saw their tricks supported; and at length they determined by a regulation, that no ant should be admitted, who did not pay five hundred grains at once, and be entitled to a place for all the year.

Hence we may date the destruction of their community. For the excluded ants incensed beyond all measure—that the mere casual possession of ten times as many grains as they were owners of, should retrench their accustomed pleasures, felt it as an abominable infraction upon their rights, as independent members of the community, and were more particularly exasperated, as many of the wealthy ants had no other recommendation than their treasures, and many of them were of characters, extremely contemptible and vile. The seeds of contention thus sown, a dreadful schism reigned throughout the whole republick; and murders and bloody contests stained at every hour, their once peaceful abodes. At length, the evil arose to a height beyond the controul of the laws; and the five hundred, and the anti-five hundred brought misery, ruin and desolation upon the community. Bleeding with wounds, and blasted with luxury and carnage, their state sunk a victim to the accumulated vengeance of their foes, whom they

had often beaten in bloody triumph. Many an enslaved grey winged ant mourns in bitterness over the melancholy day, that saw the jugglers arise in the community, and drags out the miserable remnant of his days, in pointing out to the excursive traveller, the once happy and fam'd abode of the citizens of Formica.

STRICTURES ON SATIRE.

*Jupiter, ut pereat positum rubigine telum
Nec quisquam noceat, cupido mihi pacis! at ille
Qui me commoritur, melius non tangere, clamo
Flebit, et insignis tota contabitur urbe.* HORACE.

*Peace is my dear delight, not Fleury's more,
But touch me and no minister so sore;
Who e'er offends at some unlucky time,
Slides into verse or hitches in a rhyme;
Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
And the sad burthen of some merry song.* POPE.

THE origin of all poetry has been attributed to those two passions of the human mind, which undoubtedly govern, with absolute dominion, in a state of savage life, Religion and Love. But whether we can rationally reduce to either of these sources, that species of verse which is conversant chiefly with the manners and opinions of refined society, is a question of some ambiguity. A desire to praise or censure, is certainly as predominant in the breast of an uncivilized barbarian, as it is in that

of a fair tea-drinker but his censure or commendation is most frequently embodied in action, rather than in scandal; and he defends his own opinions concerning virtue, which are commonly those of his clan, more by the strength of his arm, or by the terrour of his name, than by the pungency of his wit, or by the dexterity of his satire. It is only in a more exalted situation, and a more cultivated soil that the plant can be indigenous. Those vices, not the subjects of vulgar observation, nor the legitimate objects of law, yet the appropriate theme of ridicule are unknown in the infancy of society, and satire can be relished only when its age has offered opportunities of transgression and of intelligence; when it has actually acquired bad habits, and laid up wisdom enough to tolerate their exposure. Satire is an address to enlightened reason; but reason is the offspring of polished minds, it is scarcely perceptible among the animals of the forest, and shines with not much greater brilliancy among their kindred animals of the hut and the cave. Like laws, it is silent amid the din of arms, and like the arts it shuns the boisterous manners of fishermen and hunters.

Yet though satire is not among the effusions of the savage lover, or the savage priest, yet in a more advanced state of humanity, the same passions beautify or deform the mind, and perhaps to those passions in that state we may reasonably attribute its source. The routes of the votaries who regarded no laws, human or divine, in the celebration of their orgies, in honour of the deity they adored, frequently by their licentiousness, presented opportunities for ample reprisal on the reputation and

character of a rich or powerful injurer, who had no authority and no bribe sufficiently potent to oppress the liberty of a Bacchanalian religion. The worshipper of the God of wine, with his face smeared with lees, and his brows crowned with branches, chaunted his extemporary verses without any fear of a *cowskin*, and without any terrour of a *prosecution*. This may be the origin of satire; it is certainly, if we credit Horace, the origin of theatrical amusements, which partake many of the features of satire, though there are also many distinctions between them. They seem, however, in this place to be combined together; and, as in one of the Grecian cities the publick crier was ordered to follow some delinquents and bawl aloud their crime, so the satirick poet seems now under a necessity of adhering to the theatre in order to scrutinise its guilt, and give warning of its contagion.

But if religion has its claims on this illustrious illegitimate, other objects present themselves, which, like the cities contending for the birth of Homer, will not quietly allow another the honour of its production. Love is such a powerful rival to religion that we would immediately permit its precedency if we knew how to reconcile the frowns of the infant with the smiles of its pretended mother; if we could permit ourselves to imagine that such a sweet parent could have such a sour child. We must recollect, however, that her family is not so amiable as herself. Love and hatred are nearly connected, and by a thousand collateral and lineal ties. And satire may be allowed, as a strong witness, in its own cause, when its impartiality is daily seen. When it does

not hesitate to lash its greatest friends, and to insult with ironick smiles those who are daily providing it with the choicest objects of its appetite. What doubt then can remain respecting its pedigree, when we know the history of one of its greatest admirers. The poet Archilochus was in love, and successfully tuned his lyre to the praises of his fair one; but though her heart was melted, her father's, mailed by the triple defence of avarice, pride and cruelty, remained cold as the snows of Caucasus. He spurned the connection and denied his daughter. After many miserable adventures, the poet had recourse to his lyre, which as it had been the fortunate instrument of his love, proved the efficacious instrument of his revenge: for it is reported that the unlucky object of his wit was first rendered the laughing stock of his native town, and was finally reduced to the necessity of finishing the labours of poetick vengeance, and the miseries of his own existence by a voluntary resignation of his vital faculties.

Archilochum rabies proprio armavit iambo.

We might, perhaps, be somewhat surprised by this tragical event, and be induced to suppose, either that the poet was endowed with extraordinary powers, or that the victim possessed uncommon sensibility; but the latter supposition is denied by his previous conduct, which almost precludes pity, and the other may be correctly authorised, if we admit that Churchill was also an extraordinary genius; for it is said that his epistle to Hogarth was the operative cause of the death of that singular, though illustrious painter. Whether the exe-

cution of retributive justice is to be allowed in literature to private hands, we shall not decide; but if the malignity of Hogarth, stimulated him to a picturesque libel on the personal defects of the friend of Churchill, we can scarcely be persuaded to blame him; we may perhaps go further, and from that example draw just cause for admiration, of the rule and law of satire, which, on the credit of Tacitus, we are to believe, prevailed among the Greeks, *quorum, non modo libertas, etiam, libido impunita, aut si quis advertit dictis dicta ultus est.*

That these are the actual sources of satire, we are not ambitious of proving; but that it existed in these instances is very evident. An antiquarian might assign an origin to it earlier and more honourable; he might pretend to find specimens of it, as some pretend to find every art and every excellence, in the poems of Homer; and he might more plausibly turn to the pages of sacred writ, and point out very severe and noble effusions of satirick rage against the follies that were one day to desolate the happiness of the chosen people, and the crimes that were destined to pollute with brothers' blood the temple of religion and of God.

At all events, the art is much older than the times assigned by the late Dr. Blair, an elegant critick and a beautiful writer, but certainly not very profound, as he might have been, in his instructive lectures on rhetoric.

It is to Rome, however, that we owe the models of perfection in this species of poetry; and the courtly insinuation of Horace, and the virtuous invective of Juvenal, must continue to command the exclusive plaudits of

scholarship, unless an English ear yields to more familiar charms in the harmonious wit of Pope, the home-bred energy of Churchill, or the powerful majesty of Johnson.

Wherever it has existed, it has had its advantages, and its utility has been evident, whether it has condescended to be the assistant or aspired to be the judge of law ; but wherever it may have existed with usefulness, it could nowhere be more useful than in this latitude and on this meridian. We have many offenders among us unwhipt of justice ; and since the humanity of the state has banished the whip of the beadle, we must supply its absence by the lash of reason and ridicule. We have also among us many, who, among the ancients, would have been sentenced to have deserved well of their country ; but as civick rostral and mural crowns make no part of *our* republican paraphernalia, we must endeavour to make up the deficiency by wreaths of popular laurels and poetick bays.

In the distribution of rewards and punishments, we shall certainly remember, that our opinion must be like the verdict of an honest jury, without fear, favour, or affection. And it is proper to know, that the *arbiter elegantiarum* in manners or morality, must never be degraded from his inherent dignity ; if he contemplates vice, he must avoid it ; if he mingles with the crowd, he must do so like Plato at the Olympick games, merely as a spectator. The satirist must be a lover of his kind, but a greater lover of truth ; he must realise that he has duties to perform as well as to inculcate ; and he must be conscious that he stands aloof from the bad ac-

tors in a vicious scene, like the chorus in the Grecian drama, to vindicate the ways of God to man.

*Ille bonis faveatque et consilietur amice
Et regat iratos, et amat pacare tumentes :
Ille dapes laudet mensæ brevis ; ille salubrem
Justitiam, legesque et apertis otia portis ;
Ille tegat commissa, Deosque precetur et oret
Ut redeat miseris, abeat Fortuna Superbis.* HOR.

FINALE,

FROM ONE OF THE CONFEDERACY.

Hic quis potest esse, Quirites, tam aversus a vero, tam præceps, tam mente captus, qui neget hæc omnia quæ videmus, præcipueque hanc urbem, deorum immortalium nutu, atque potestate administrari ? Etenim cum esset ita responsum, cædes, incendia, interitumque reipublicæ comparari, et ea a perditis civibus ; quæ tum propter magnitudinem scelerum nonnullis incredibilia videbantur, ea non modo cogitata a nefariis civibus, verum etiam suscepta esse sensistis. TULLY.

We came forward in the cause of the publick. We have attained the point we wished, we are satisfied ; and our task is done. If in the execution of it we have been found more than necessarily severe, let it be remembered it was undertaken with an ardent and determined zeal. We did not set out merely to find fault, but to remove the wrong. In the blowing up of a mine the commander is not answerable for all the innocent spirits who may perish in the enterprize. And I trust we shall be found as well inclined to give praise when deserved

as we were ready to annoy with disapprobation. Whatever wounds we have inflicted, they were necessary at the time and we are sorry we were necessitated to use such extremes—but the strife is over, and we hope the wrongs and the remedies may rest together in the dust; for ourselves we have nothing to say to the publick we came before them unsolicited and we retire unrequested, until it shall seem fit for us again to show ourselves. We shall never slumber when there is a necessity for our appearance—we have been threatened with discovery exposure and censure; but to these lynx-eyed adventurers, we answer, if they have read our work, they must be well convinced we have no fears which they can excite. Our cause was a noble one, and has nothing to do with either shame or fear; and if they still require to know why we are secret, we say because we wished the work to take an impartial effect, unbiassed by party opinion or any personal motive. If there be any praise due to the work itself, we consign it to those literary prowlers who are ever willing to own all illegitimate offsprings, and we pledge ourselves never to take the trouble to detect them. They are welcome. And we assure the Managers, we would, whenever there shall be any necessity, undertake to defend them, if their cause is a good one, with as much force, as in the present instance we have opposed them. We have the self satisfaction of knowing we are unawed, unswayed and candid, and the pen will never be lifted by us, but when these are its exciting principles. To gentlemen criticks, loungers and fashionable time wasters, if the harsh grating of our musick has discomposed their

nerves, and strung them to a resisting strain, we give notice, that we are ready to answer their objections, whenever it may suit them to request it; but we would caution them to reflect before they commence on the force and bitterness with which we shall reward them. They have had a sample—and must not afterwards complain, if they should get the worst of the assay. We would be at peace; if they rouse us, we shall compensate them ten-fold. We, in no instance, have sported with the feelings of any individual. We take no pleasure in shewing the weaknesses, follies, and depravities of human nature—but where these follies and depravities of the heart are set off to mislead an unwary people into the snares of vice, or sinks of wretchedness, it becomes every good man to turn from such mockery, and to cast down the idols with the illusion; to describe the manner in which this should be undertaken, most worthy of the people, and best befitting the delinquent, would be a hard, and perhaps impossible task; but it may safely be averred, that in such cases, nothing which truth and honesty dictate, should be refused. It were vain to talk of wounding the feelings of the men who had undertaken to betray or mislead the unthinking multitude; they should be retaliated on in their own way; they who have set human law at defiance, by the cunning of pretext, and who wear religious habits as a cloak for sin, can only meet their punishment by diving into their hearts and mysteries, and shewing the world the character and meaning of the man as written on his heart by the depredations of vice. Malignant, indeed, were that man, who for his amusement and to indulge his spleen,

could entertain himself with an exhibition of this sort. It would rather become a thinking man to weep. But we have said before, we were directed by the purest motives; we say so again: we are satisfied with our labours. If the publick are pleased, it is well; if not, it is also well. In gaining the contested point, we have all the fame we wish. "Othello's occupation's gone."

ODE II.—BOOK I.

COMPLIMENTARY.

The waning moon in lustre bright
Sinks beneath the western ocean,
Mists and clouds obscure the night
Mingling with the storm's commotion.

But soon will darkness disappear,
Brighter lustre brings the morning;
Storm-struck flowers their heads can rear,
Sweeter far for night's adorning.

So manager Wood had like to have run
Mischievous, by bad adviser;
Now the system is undone
We hail him, very much the wiser.

And though we speak in merry mood,
Speak we not the less sincerely;
To see him stand where once he stood,
Charms the friends that love him dearly.

He's now the publick friend again,
Now again they will respect him :
Publick praise will salve his pain ;
Better friends will now direct him.

If the Cynick rout might roar,
Faults he had, in full exposure ;
Some he's parted with—no more
Cynicks bark about them—no sure.

The rest perhaps he soon will leave ;
But if he wishes to retain 'em,
Publick candour will receive,
Proper efforts to explain them.

His character at once to splice,
We'll of his faults make no selection ;
Weigh but his goodness 'gainst his vice,
That will serve him for protection.

So William now again adieu !
Praise attend your reformation ;
But if again you err—par bleu !
Never hope again salvation.

SENEX.